

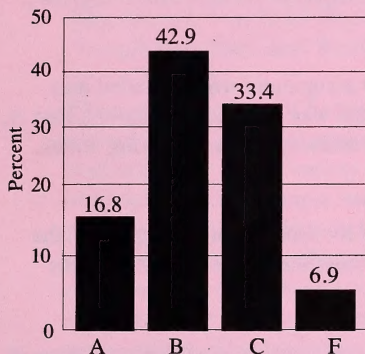
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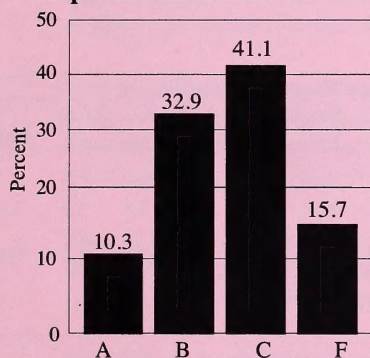
# English 30

## Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for January 1995

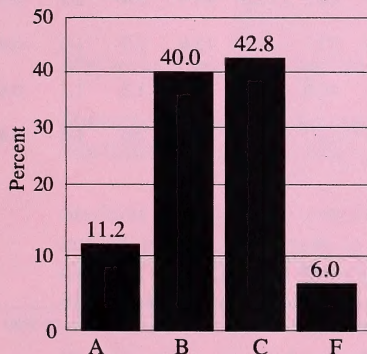
**School-Awarded Mark**



**Diploma Examination Mark**



**Final Course Mark**



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the January 1995 administration of the English 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

### *Description of the Examination*

The English 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each part is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

### *Achievement of Standards*

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 10 147 students who wrote the January 1995 examination.

- 94.0% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 11.2% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

The competence of students achieving the standard of excellence in writing was impressive. However, the skills students at the acceptable standard demonstrated tended to be uneven; students showed ability on occasion to use language well, but this was not always sustained.

### *Provincial Averages*

- The average school-awarded mark was 66.8%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 62.5%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 65.1%.



## Part A: Written Response

*Part A: Written Response* is written at a different time from *Part B: Reading*. Students are required to complete two writing assignments related to the same piece of literature. Both assignments assess a variety of reading, writing, and thinking skills.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are in the *English 30 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examination Program*, for the 1994-95 school year, which is available in all schools.

In January 1995, the single scoring category formerly used to mark the minor assignment was expanded into Thought and Detail and Writing Skills. Also in January, the two-marker system was adopted for marking Part A, which means that it is now possible for students to be awarded marks that are midway between scoring scales. (See the following table.)

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

### *Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores*

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
			Excellent (5)	(4.5)	Proficient (4)	(3.5)	Satisfactory (3)	(2.5)	Limited (2)	(1.5)	Poor (1)	Ins*
<b>Minor Assignment</b>												
The student is required to respond personally and thoughtfully to literature and to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.	Thought and Detail	7.5	3.5	3.3	15.7	13.7	30.7	13.7	13.3	2.8	2.2	1.1
	Writing Skills	7.5	3.1	3.2	17.7	14.8	37.5	11.2	8.9	1.4	1.2	1.0
<b>Major Assignment</b>												
The major assignment maintains a thematic connection to the minor assignment. The student is required to demonstrate an appreciation of literary works studied in class by discussing theme and the literary techniques that the author uses to support that theme. The student is also required to synthesize thoughts clearly and correctly in writing.	Thought and Detail	2.5	3.9	2.6	13.6	10.9	28.3	16.3	18.4	3.4	2.1	0.4
	Organization	7.5	3.4	2.6	13.8	12.2	37.7	14.6	12.6	1.7	1.0	0.4
	Matters of Choice	7.5	4.2	2.6	16.3	12.5	40.6	11.4	9.3	1.5	1.2	0.4
	Matters of Correctness	7.5	4.7	3.8	18.7	24.5	33.7	11.2	9.4	2.0	1.6	0.4

\*Ins (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

**Note:** The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded the acceptable standard on each scoring category.



### Minor Assignment: Reader's Response to Literature

For the 1995 year, the *Minor Assignment* became *Reader's Response to Literature*. The present assignment is intended to focus the student as a reader on his or her own response to a text and theme that is provided.

Also, the previous Total Impression criteria for evaluating the minor assignment have been expanded to *Thought and Detail* and *Writing Skills*.

The poem "Heritage of Sadness" proved challenging but rich in detail. Because the student was asked to convey his/her personal response to the poem and to the topic, *the effect* of adversity of the human spirit, students chose a wide variety of directions, approaches, and focuses in which to convey their ideas or impressions. For example, students chose the **philosophical**: "maybe tomorrow we will start caring for the damage we have done to the land"; **explanatory/exploratory**: following the poem through; **personal**: effect on individuals; **exhortative**: taking an advisory stance—"we must . . ." Students responded to the poem in terms of the land or environment, the people or individuals, the land as a metaphor for the people individually or universally, and sometimes the spiritual. No real difficulties in addressing the assignment were evident. The assignment appeared to serve as an effective warm-up for the major assignment, and responses were fresh, interesting, valid, and competent. The marks (see table, p. 2) show that 66.9% of the students received a score of **(3) Satisfactory** or higher for thought and detail on this assignment (80.6% at or above the acceptable standard).

Students achieving scores of **(4, 4.5) Proficient** and **(5) Excellent** were perceptive and focused in their personal response to the poem. Often, these students suggested that the victims of adversity are "lands and their people." Some students identified both negative and positive effects of adversity. Often, this writing reflected the tone of the poem. Writing at this level was fluent and controlled.

Those students achieving a **(3) Satisfactory** usually identified the effect of adversity on the human spirit as being devastating. Some students wrote of adversity as if it were a human attribute or a disease; for example, "adversity on the human spirit is caused by . . ."

Very few students failed to provide discernible evidence of an attempt to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. Some of these students, unfortunately, seemed to be responding to a previous assignment.

### Major Assignment: Literature Composition

Students were to apply the topic, the effect of adversity on the human spirit, to literature studied. Students had little difficulty in choosing selections that applied to the topic.

Students who achieved overall scores of **(4, 4.5) Proficient** and **(5) Excellent** tended to recognize that authors introduce adversity to reveal character. Often these students recognized that adversity has the effect of strengthening the human spirit. Many very effectively developed their theses by comparing two characters' responses to adversity.

Students who achieved overall scores of **(3) Satisfactory** had no difficulty selecting literature that applied to the topic. Some students lost track of one of the ingredients (effect, adversity, human spirit) of the topic. They cited a character who had encountered adversity and chronicled that adversity, but dealt somewhat perfunctorily with the other aspects of the topic.



## Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	C	53.9
2	C	79.0
3	C	50.9
4	D	71.6
5	B	71.1
6	C	63.5
7	C	82.1
8	B	63.4
9	A	57.0
10	A	45.6
11	A	47.1
12	D	56.5
13	A	71.2
14	B	75.2
15	C	53.9
16	D	82.8
17	A	19.1
18	A	30.1
19	A	78.9
20	B	31.4
21	C	74.6
22	A	79.0
23	A	52.2
24	D	52.5
25	B	75.5
26	A	57.7
27	B	72.7
28	C	67.4
29	B	69.1
30	C	39.9
31	D	75.4
32	D	51.3
33	B	57.2
34	C	72.6
35	C	82.7
36	D	69.4
37	C	67.0
38	B	56.8
39	D	80.6
40	B	73.3
41	A	80.7
42	C	62.2
43	D	68.5
44	B	61.2
45	D	54.5
46	D	64.2
47	A	53.1
48	B	60.9
49	B	50.1
50	A	65.3
51	D	47.0
52	B	48.8
53	C	56.0
54	B	31.7
55	D	55.9
56	A	80.6
57	C	45.3
58	B	85.2
59	B	69.6
60	A	80.7
61	C	69.6
62	D	81.9
63	D	72.7
64	C	81.0
65	A	76.3
66	B	58.4
67	D	61.3
68	D	62.2
69	A	62.7
70	D	75.6

## Part B: Reading

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

### Examination Blueprint

*Part B: Reading* has a value of 70 marks, one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1995 according to these classifications.

Classification by Course Content	Classification by Thinking Skills			Total
	Literar Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	
Meanings	5, 15, 36, 64	3, 6, 7, 10, 17, 25, 31, 32, 34, 38, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58, 59	20, 45, 56, 57, 70	32 Items (22%)
Critical Response	24	1, 8, 11, 13, 16, 19, 21, 22, 26, 30, 33, 35, 49, 55, 61, 63	2, 9, 23, 27, 28, 29	23 Items (17%)
Human Experience and Values		4, 12, 14, 18, 37, 39, 43, 60, 66	44, 62, 65, 67, 68, 69	15 Items (11%)
<b>Total</b>	5 Items (4%)	48 Items (34%)	17 Items (12%)	70 Items (50%)

### Subtest Results\*\*

**Results are in average raw scores.**

Total Part B: 44.3 out of 70

#### Course Content

- Meanings: 19.5 out of 32
- Critical Response: 14.9 out of 23
- Human Experience and Values: 9.9 out of 15

\*\* Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

\*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly



### Examiners' Comments

#### Standards

There were no statistical indicators of problem questions on the Part B: Reading examination; consequently a teacher review was not held during marking. An informal poll of teachers has not revealed any concerns about difficulty, appropriateness, or fairness.

The passage that proved most difficult for students was *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The average difficulty for these 12 questions was 54.7. (Part B: Readings average was 63.3.)

#### Detailed Discussion

All of the eight multiple-choice questions in the table below are from *The Importance of Being Earnest*. For each question, statistics are provided for three student groups. A review of student responses to these questions may offer a meaningful glimpse of English 30 students' reading performance.

#### Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number							
	9	10	11	15	17	18	19	20
All Students	57.0	45.6	47.1	53.9	19.1	30.1	78.9	31.4
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	76.7	66.1	66.6	82.0	41.1	54.1	96.2	48.8
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% to 64%, or C, on the whole examination	51.9	38.5	42.5	44.8	14.0	20.8	77.0	26.4

The results of these selected questions suggest that the ability to recognize writer's tone (attitude toward subject matter and reader) correlates highly with success on both Part B: Reading and Part A: Written Response.

**Few English 30 teachers would contend that *The Importance of Being Earnest* is an inappropriately difficult text for English 30 students. Few would contend that English 30 graduates should NOT be sensitive to satire and ironic tone. That even relatively successful students demonstrated the reverse is a matter for consideration.**



9. In this excerpt, Cecily's comment in lines 7 and 8 serves **mainly** to

- A. establish the satirical tone
- B. emphasize Cecily's charm
- C. reveal Gwendolen's intentions
- D. provide background information

**Question 9.** Students who did not recognize the satirical tone (A) of the passage may have failed to pay close attention to the preamble, the first sentence of which announces that the play is a "comedy satirizing Victorian society." The preamble goes on to explain *how* that society is being satirized—by way of presenting the romantic adventures of two young men. Readers then should be alerted to the fact that all details are serving a double purpose: to entertain and to mock Victorian notions of propriety. Even readers unaware of the characteristics of Victorian Society must have suspected the seriousness of these dramatic events as they read the plot summary of the complicated preceding action.

Had students noted that the question requires a judgement of the *best* of the four alternatives provided, they would have realized that alternatives B, C, and D are all "correct" but also, are all included by alternative A.

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B), 76.7% correctly answered this question. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, 51.9% answered correctly. Of all students, 32.3% chose alternative B.

10. The context of Gwendolen's comments on men and family (lines 19–23) suggests that when Gwendolen describes a man who neglects his domestic duties as "painfully effeminate," she means that he becomes

- A. dangerously worldly
- B. pathetically affected
- C. decidedly cowardly
- D. alarmingly dutiful

**Question 10.** This question proved to be very difficult with only 45.6% of all students responding correctly. Students are directed to the context, lines 19 to 23, in which the character Gwendolen reveals her idea of what makes men attractive, their becoming "painfully effeminate." In her speech, she essentially reverses what would be the current connotation of "effeminate." Students who did not reread the text may have responded as if this were merely a vocabulary question, therefore considering B and C as reasonable choices:

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B), 66.1% correctly chose A. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, only 38.5% answered this question correctly.

11. Gwendolen's remarks "Cecily, Mamma . . . through my glasses" (lines 23–26) achieve humour by moving from the

- A. abstract to the literal
- B. playful to the serious
- C. foolish to the practical
- D. imaginary to the theoretical

**Question 11.** Gwendolen's unique perceptions in her speech in lines 19 to 26 continues as she mentions her mother's strict views on education that favour shortsightedness.

The reader probably does not expect that Gwendolen is referring literally to her eyesight. If students have read this speech and considered what she has said about her father, about "attractive" men, about education, they should be becoming aware that Gwendolen appears to be the embodiment of the proper young Victorian woman, all manner with little matter.



**Question 11 (cont'd).** This question proved to be difficult with only 47.1% of all students answering correctly. Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B), 66.6% correctly chose alternative A. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, 42.5% answered correctly. Students who failed the whole examination appeared to have guessed.

Interestingly, all students did quite well on questions 13 and 14 (not included here). The difficulties for these two questions were 71.2% and 75.2% respectively. Both of these questions require students to perceive that Gwendolen is feeling threatened.

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15. For Gwendolen, the real interest of "History" (lines 54–56) lies in its

- A. truthful clarity
- B. scholastic merit
- C. gossip revelations
- D. practical usefulness

**Question 15.** This question proved to be surprisingly difficult, with only 53.9% of all students answering correctly. Students who took the time to reread lines 54 to 56 would note that Gwendolen says that without the examples of "indiscretions" (gossip revelations) contained in History, it would be unreadable. Perhaps those students who chose alternative A (truthful clarity) did not recognize Gwendolen's intent when she refers to examples of men's susceptibilities as "painful." She does not mean "painful" to her, but rather of great interest: in fact, the only matters of interest that history holds for her.

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17. The context suggests that when Cecily remarks "In fact, I am going to be his" (line 70), she means that she will

- A. look after Ernest
- B. challenge Ernest
- C. belong to Ernest
- D. bewitch Ernest

**Question 17.** Gwendolen would say that Question 17 was alarmingly successful. Only 19.1% of all students answered correctly. These results suggest that students did not take the time to reread the context of Cecily's remark. In lines 68 and 69, Gwendolen insists on being reassured that in fact, Ernest is not Cecily's guardian. In line 70, Cecily replies that she is going to be "his," Ernest's, guardian. Students should be reminded that when they are referred to "context" in a question, they are expected to look beyond the literal. Even those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B) went in large numbers to alternative C.

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18. Gwendolen's and Cecily's references to Ernest in lines 91 to 96 reveal their

- A. attitude toward men
- B. fear of public opinion
- C. misjudgement of Ernest's intentions
- D. misconception of Ernest's character

**Questions 18, 19, and 20** are theme questions. **Question 18** refers students to a specific exchange between Gwendolen and Cecily. After they have confirmed, by referring to their respective diaries, that Ernest has indeed proposed to each of them, they compete in their eagerness to rescue and forgive the "poor fellow," the "dear boy." They do not regard Ernest as a man of doubtful integrity, but as a child who has been lured away.



**Question 18 (cont'd).** Students sensitive to the satirical tone correctly chose alternative A. Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B), 54.1% answered correctly. Of those who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, 20.8% answered correctly. Of this latter group, 43% chose alternative D. Neither Gwendolen nor Cecily have misconceptions of Ernest; they both know that he is “helpless.”

19. The ironic contrast between the way Gwendolen and Cecily address each other at the beginning of the excerpt and at the end of the excerpt serves to
- A. reinforce the artificiality of their affection
  - B. convey the humiliating effect of sociability
  - C. emphasize their pact to unite against Ernest
  - D. indicate their respectful regard for each other
20. In this excerpt, the playwright's **main** target of satire is
- A. wedded bliss
  - B. social pretension
  - C. masculine vulnerability
  - D. feminine competitiveness

**Question 19.** This question proved easy for all students with 78.9% answering correctly. Students obviously noticed the abrupt move from excessive warmth to formality to hostility.

**Question 20.** The last question of this set requires students to make a judgement about the main target of satire in this excerpt. The first question in this set, Question 19, requires students to *recognize* satire, the last question to identify the *object* of that satire.

Students who read the entire text carefully will have remembered that the first sentence of the preamble mentions that “this comedy satirizes Victorian society.” The most apparent aspect of Victorian society was an outward display of propriety, regardless of the occasion.

While the manners remain unchanged, Alternative B, “social pretension,” is the *best* choice because it includes A, C, and D.

**Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B**

While it is not intended that Parts A and B of the English 30 Diploma Examination be considered to be separate exams, it is interesting to compare the distribution of scores on the two parts of the examination.

	Part A	Part B
A	12.1	15.9
B	24.9	31.3
C	45.8	34.6
F	17.2	18.2

For further information, contact Gail Gates, Mary Lou Campbell, or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 403-427-0010.